

Expert Earth Movers



The Socorro Field Division of the Albuquerque Area Office is comprised of construction and heavy machinery operators who specialize in river maintenance along the Middle Rio Grande. The expertise of these crews in both river maintenance and habitat restoration has recently garnered a lot of recognition in New Mexico.

During a dedication ceremony at the Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, the crew who worked on the Rio Hondo Restoration Project through an interagency agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was touted for their knowledge of this type of work.

Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, Regional Director for the Service's Southwest Region said this project will be used as an example in "collaboration. This is how DOI agencies should partner."

The work near the Pecos River in southeastern New Mexico included installing a fixed height earthen plug to divert river flows below 750 cfs into a new Rio Hondo channel. The diversion of the existing Rio



Hondo back to the pre-1904 Rio Hondo channel required excavating about one mile of new channel, reshaping three miles of pre-1904 channel, and removal of saltcedar from the pre-1904 channel. The construction crew was also commended for their ability to look at plans and actual work and see when things are not going to work and offer workable solutions.



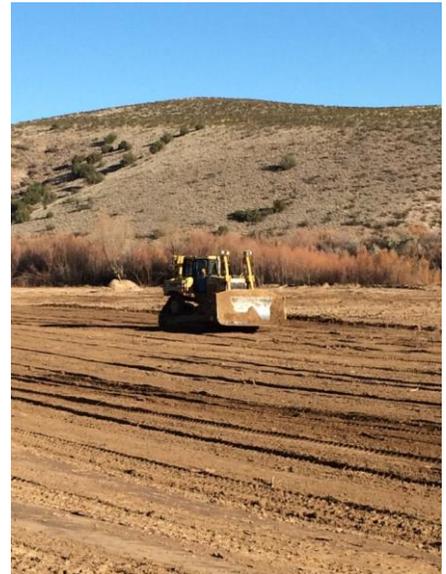
This diversion was a matter of much discussion on the tour of the project following the dedication ceremony in November. Floyd Truetken, the refuge manager, said he would have thought these rocks were hand placed if he hadn't watched the crews use their equipment to push the rocks into place. The Service also commended the great work and cooperation of Cord Everetts, a civil engineering tech from the Albuquerque Area Office who served as the Project Coordinator.

Although the Albuquerque Area Office often receives requests for the expertise of the force account crews, their primary responsibility is to respond to floods or other river maintenance issues in the Middle Rio Grande. But they travel throughout New Mexico to perform work. In 2013, when New Mexico experienced fall floods from heavy rainstorms, the Socorro crews were in four different locations and rushed back to the Middle Rio Grande to respond.



One of the Socorro crews is currently performing work at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge through an interagency agreement with New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and the Fish and Wildlife Service. This 16-acre floodplain restoration project along the Rio Grande within the refuge, which is located between Belen and Socorro, is aimed at assist in the recovery of the region’s endangered and threatened fish and birds, especially the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow, the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. It will also reduce the potential for flooding that could impact the refuge.

“This project is a great example of how state and federal agencies can work together to achieve mutually agreed upon goals in an expedited manner,” Interstate Stream Commission Director Deborah Dixon said during a recent Open House to highlight the project.



The Socorro Crew was recognized at Bitter Lake with a cake showcasing their work.

#####



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

The History of Martin Luther King Day

Who originated the idea of a national holiday in honor of MLK?

Martin Luther King Day is a federal holiday observed on the third Monday in January. In 2016, it falls on Jan. 18.

It took 15 years to create the federal Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. Congressman John Conyers, Democrat from Michigan, first introduced legislation for a commemorative holiday four days after King was assassinated in 1968. After the bill became stalled, petitions endorsing the holiday containing six million names were submitted to Congress.

Conyers and Rep. Shirley Chisholm, Democrat of New York, resubmitted King Holiday legislation each subsequent legislative session. Public pressure for the holiday mounted during the 1982 and 1983 civil rights marches in Washington.

Congress passed the holiday legislation in 1983, which was then signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. A compromise moving the holiday from Jan. 15, King's birthday, which was considered too close to Christmas and New Year's, to the third Monday in January helped overcome opposition to the law.



National Consensus on the Holiday

A number of states resisted celebrating the holiday. Some opponents said King did not deserve his own holiday—contending that the entire civil rights movement rather than one individual, however instrumental, should be honored. Several southern states include celebrations for various Confederate generals on that day. Arizona voters approved the holiday in 1992 after a tourist boycott. In 1999, New Hampshire changed the name of Civil Rights Day to Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.

Check out [Infoplease](#) for more information and to view the MLK Holiday Timeline.

#####



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Four Corners Construction Office Receives Safety Gold!



By Beth Fox and Larry Haley

The Four Corners Construction Office (FCCO) was recently awarded the Regional Director's 2016 Gold Safety Medal. In a memorandum to FCCO Project Construction Engineer Barry Longwell, Regional Safety Manager Dan Mitchell noted *“your office maintains a leadership position, one that continues to drive effective learning through action. Your efforts, frank assessments and discussions continue to be invaluable to us as we seek to improve ourselves.”* The award was “virtually” presented to all FCCO employees on November 6, 2015, by Deputy Regional Director Brent Esplin and Regional Safety Manager Dan Mitchell via a video teleconference.

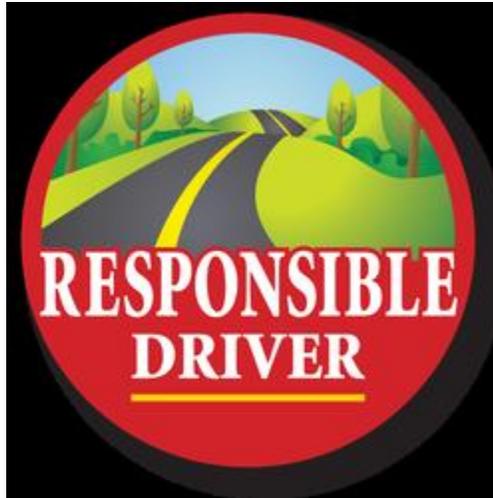
This achievement reflects FCCO’s consistent efforts and dedication to improving safety. The FCCO was commended for their team efforts to comply with existing laws and regulations; their conformance to Reclamation and region policies; and for having the discipline required to consistently improve. Effectively engaging employees in the development of the Office’s safety plan was a key component in the implementation of FCCO’s Safety Program. This year's assessment identified many safety management practices that will continue to enhance FCCOs safety efforts into the future and reduce the risk of accidents and injuries. The FCCO is committed to constantly striving to improve their safety program, and takes pride in receiving the Regional Director's 2016 Gold Safety Medal.

#####



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Driver Responsibilities and Use of a Government Vehicle



This memorandum serves as a reminder to all Upper Colorado Region employees who operate a Government-owned, rental, or privately owned vehicle in performance of daily official duties of the policies and procedures regarding vehicle usage and driver responsibilities.

All vehicle operators are responsible for the proper operation, care and security of the vehicle/equipment. Operators must safeguard keys, credit cards and the vehicle. When the vehicle/equipment is left unattended, the vehicle operator shall:

1. Close all windows
2. Lock doors and trunk
3. Remove all pilfer-able items from vehicle or store out of public view
4. Remove keys and credit cards from the vehicle and secure in a locked designated area.

Any vehicle operated under adverse conditions (bumpy roads, hilly terrains, rocky surfaces, deep mud/snow, etc.) should be checked for damage after each use to ensure that the vehicle is in safe operating condition for future use. If repairs are suspected or required, the vehicle operator should contact the Property Office as soon as possible.

All vehicle accidents/incidents (whether or not resulting in damage to Government vehicle/equipment) must be reported immediately (within 24 hours) to the employee's Supervisor, Safety Officer and Property Management Officer.

Whenever vehicle damage results through misconduct or improper operation by an employee, the employee shall be held financially responsible. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, vehicle operation under the influence of alcohol or narcotics and willful abuse or misuse of a vehicle. Improper operation by the driver shall include driving a vehicle in a willfully wrong, negligent (including inattention), or in a careless manner, including failure to adjust driving speed to compensate for road, inclement weather or other conditions including darkness.

All Vehicle Operators Must:



1. Ensure they are using the appropriate vehicle for the assigned task and are familiar with that type of vehicle/equipment.
2. Inspect vehicle for damage prior to usage;
3. Ensure there are no visual impairments during the operation of the vehicle;
4. Physically check for hazards and clearances along the intended path of travel prior to commencing backing the vehicle or completing sharp turns. When other employees are present, they should provide guidance and direction from outside of the vehicle.
5. Fleet Managers are responsible for making sure the correct license plates are placed on the front and rear of the vehicle/equipment and are secured with lock nuts.

Vehicle Operators are responsible for complying with all local, state, and Federal laws and motor vehicle operator regulations, and adherence to all traffic signs and signals including parking restrictions. Any moving violations incurred while operating a Government-owned or rented vehicle, are the responsibility of the vehicle operator, and must be reported to the supervisor.

Employees who use or authorize the use of a motor vehicle, for other than official business, are subject to suspension of at least 30 days, or up to and including removal from Federal Service.

Further guidance can be attained in 41 CFR 102-34; 41, Reclamation Manual 114S-38 and 39, and DOI Motor Vehicle Management Handbook. If further information is required please contact Virginia Thurgood Property Management Specialist at 801-524-3623

**PLEASE BE KIND AND CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS AND
CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF!**

At some point, you might be in the position to drive one of the government vehicles on official government business. We ask that you read and comply with the following vehicle use and care checklist:

BEFORE DRIVING THE VEHICLE

1. Check the outside of the vehicle for body or trim damage, cracked lights or windows, and worn tires. Make sure there is a working spare tire and equipment to change a tire if needed.
2. Check under the vehicle for spots (water from radiator, oil or transmission).
3. Check inside the vehicle, are the mirrors, safety belts, lights, door latches and dashboard gauges functioning properly? Adjust mirrors and seats as needed.
4. Record the vehicle's mileage on the mileage report form in the vehicle, located inside the binder. If forms are missing, please alert the Property Management Group for refills.

BEFORE RETURNING THE VEHICLE

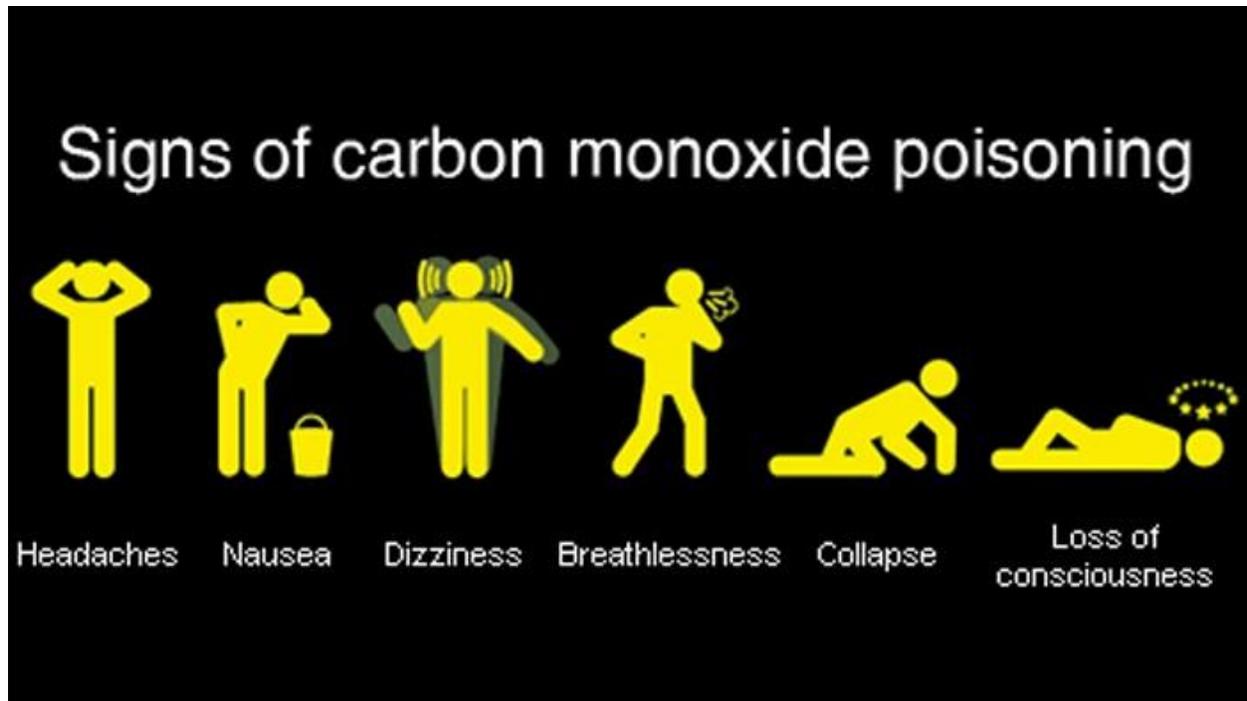
1. Make sure the vehicle is filled with gas, and has been washed and cleaned inside and out for the next driver.
2. Be sure to record the ending mileage on your mileage report form.
3. Fill in the appropriate cost authority on the mileage report, which includes the correct WBS and 10-Digit Cost Center.
4. Notate on the mileage report any problems encountered with the vehicle.
5. Remove all trash from inside the vehicle.

#####



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Carbon Monoxide, the Silent Killer



On December 30th at 4:00 am, Dave Gates of the Four Corners Construction Office and his wife received a call from Saint Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction, CO. Their daughter and two grandsons were being air lifted to the LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City with carbon monoxide poisoning. The fire box on their furnace had rotted out creating small holes which vented the furnace into their home instead of outside through the flue.

Dave's daughter woke up and wasn't feeling good. She got out of bed and instead of going to the bathroom, she went outside. Fortunately, she grabbed her cell phone. At first she passed out but when she awoke she called 911. They were all three airlifted to the LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City. After receiving treatment, they are all three back home safe and healthy.

More than **400 Americans die** from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning every year. More than **20,000 visit the emergency room**, and more than **4,000 others are hospitalized**.^{1/}

Where does carbon monoxide come from?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced when burning any fossil fuels or wood for heating or running engines. Sources of CO in your home can include fireplaces, furnaces, generators, stoves, water heaters, a running car or truck, and generators.

What is CO?

CO is a tasteless, colorless, and odorless gas. It replaces the oxygen in your bloodstream because it is more "sticky" than oxygen and binds more easily and more aggressively to your blood cells than oxygen does.

What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?

- Headaches



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Breathlessness
- Collapse
- Loss of consciousness

How can you prevent CO poisoning?

- Install CO detectors on each level of your home, outside each sleeping area
- Test regularly and replace batteries as necessary
- Have your appliances inspected annually for possible CO leaks
- Never use generators inside
- Do not leave your car running in a closed garage

What do you do if the CO detector alarms or you suspect CO poisoning?

- Get everyone outside as quickly and safety as possible
- Call 911

Check out the 2 1/2 minute video about CO poisoning and poisoning prevention:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ztwol25j8_Q

<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/carbon-monoxide.aspx>

#####

Making Data on the Colorado River Basin’s Troubling Depletion More Accessible



The improving accessibility of open data is providing insights into the Colorado River basin’s 16-year drought, thanks to a recently launched, interactive digital tool from the U.S. Interior Department.

The “Drought in the Colorado River Basin” portal details the state of the watershed that supplies 1 in 10 Americans and 5.5 million acres of land with water, despite reservoirs at about 50 percent capacity.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

The basin spans seven states and is one focus of the U.S. Geological Survey's Open Water Data Initiative to quantify the use of national water resources.

“Projects like this one show the power of open data to help us better understand our resource challenges,” Interior Department Deputy Secretary Michael Connor said in a December announcement. “By enabling us to see the complex challenges in the Colorado River Basin visually, use of this website will help us devise timely actions to build resilience to the drought, spurring innovation along the way.”

Chief among the department's concerns is the possibility that, if the drought persists, areas of Arizona, Nevada and Southern California that comprise the river's Lower Basin could begin seeing reduced water deliveries in 2017.

Infographics showing major dams and canals that help to conserve water throughout the basin and how water use impacts storage appear throughout.

For more information, go to the [Department of the Interior](#) or [Route Fifty](#).

#####

New Year Thoughts From Brent Esplin



There are different New Year's throughout the year. Most recently, at the stroke of midnight on December 31st, calendar year 2015 closed and calendar year 2016 followed suit. At the end of September 2015, federal fiscal year 2015 closed and fiscal year 2016 started. Different cultures also have New Year's celebrations at various points during the year. The Chinese New Year's Celebration is in February. The Nepali Calendar is known as the Bikram Sambat Nepali calendar. Under their calendar, the New Year begins in the middle of April, which starts the year 2073 in their calendar system.

The close of a year is a good time to reflect on accomplishments from the previous year and to look forward to opportunities in the coming year. The Upper Colorado

Region had many significant accomplishments across all our program areas, with each Area Office and Regional Division contributing to these accomplishments.

The beginning of a new year also provides an opportunity to look forward and consider what is possible. Think of all those dreaded resolutions that we often think about, but only a few who have the determination to carry them past the first few months of the new year. I often find myself in that boat. Good intentions that become lost overtime as I settle back into the same routine that existed at the end of the prior year.

In the spirit of the new year, the Regional Director's office is working on a set of region-wide goals. The goals will reflect key high-priority areas for regional accomplishment. The limited set of regional-wide goals being considered is not to diminish from the importance of other work that is being accomplished



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

by the individual offices. They are intended to help us prioritize a few key planned accomplishments that can be communicated to the Commission's office and other key stakeholders.

The Department of the Interior and Reclamation develop high priority goals on a regular basis. Reclamation's high priority goals are tied to Interior's Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2014-2018. Interior's strategic plan and Reclamation's high priority goals serve as the basis for our budget request to Congress.

Reclamation has a proud history of accomplishment, as we have developed water related infrastructure that has served as the catalyst for economic development in the Western United States. I fully expect that Reclamation's Upper Colorado Region will continue to make significant contributions to Reclamation's mission through the individual efforts of each of you over the year.

Now, about those resolutions....

#####

Who's New

Reece Carpenter

Western Colorado Area Office – Hydrologic Technician



Reece Carpenter was recently hired as a hydrologic technician for the Western Colorado Area Office. Reece comes to Colorado from Nashville, Tennessee where he was born and raised. Reece is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps and holds a Bachelor of Science in Geology.

Reece is very excited to be a part of an impressively talented and dedicated team.

Reece enjoys waterskiing, biking, rock climbing, hiking, cranking up his guitar amp and grabbing Saturday morning coffees with his wife.

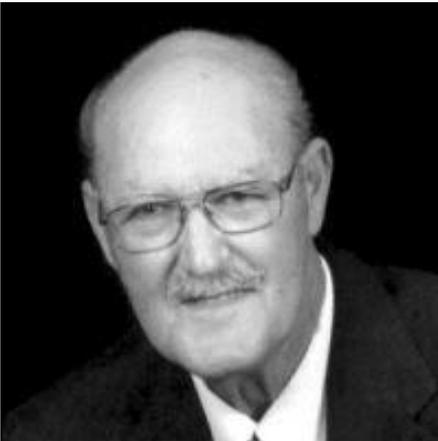
#####

#####



In Transition

William Bryant “Bill” Herring May 5, 1943 - December 13, 2015



William Bryant “Bill” Herring, 72, went to be with his Lord from his home in Belton, Texas, on Sunday, December 13, 2015, following a courageous battle with cancer. He was born May 5, 1943, to Joseph Jennings Herring and Flora Eula Selph Herring in a farmhouse near Jasper, Florida. Bill spent his early childhood in the Jasper and Jennings, Florida area before moving with his family to Fernandina Beach and later to Yulee, Florida. After graduating from Yulee High School in 1961, he served in the United States Air Force.

Mr. Herring married Kathleen Ruthann “Kathie” Green on June 12, 1966 in Lakewood, Colorado. Their first home was in Yulee where Bill worked for the Florida State Road Department. Eventually the Herrings moved to Grand Junction, Colorado, where they had two children: Kristine Denise “Kristi” Coffey of Fort Worth, Texas and William Bryant “Billy” Herring, Jr., of Belton, Texas.

Bill worked for a contractor with the Atomic Energy Commission in a petrographic lab in Grand Junction while taking several classes at Mesa College, studying geology and petrology. His civil service career also involved working for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation with the Department of the Interior and later for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Grand Junction. The Herring family moved to Belton, Texas in 1986, where Bill continued his work with the Corps as a Construction Representative at Fort Hood, Texas. He retired from the Corps of Engineers on January 3, 2003.

Bill was an active member of First Baptist Church, Belton, where he served as a deacon, a member of several committees, a choir member and a member of the Golden Age Club. He was an active member of SPEBSQSA in Colorado, a national men’s barbershop organization, and also organized and sang in gospel quartets in Colorado and Texas. Some of his other interests included hunting, fishing, traveling and reading. Bill especially enjoyed going to the cabins in the country that he and Kathie owned, first in Arkansas, then most recently in Buffalo, Texas. Bill’s family fondly remembers his storytelling abilities, as well as his affinity for tinkering in his shop where he could fix almost anything.

Mr. Herring is survived by his wife, Kathie, daughter and son-in-law, Kristi and Darrell Coffey of Fort Worth, Texas, son and daughter -in-law, Billy and Amanda Sherborne Herring, of Belton, Texas, five grandchildren (Tyler Glenn Coffey, Katelyn Elizabeth Coffey, Grace Chandler Herring, Samuel Hunter Herring and Aiden Justus Herring), an older brother and sister-in-law, Jimmy Joseph and Janie Herring, of Jennings, Florida, and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents.

#####



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

What Is the Media Saying About Reclamation This Week?

[Interior Secretary Jewell to testify on Gold King, mines at hearing](#)

[Why We Have to Act on Climate Now -- In One Chart](#)

[Jewell: No 'criminal activity' in mine spill](#)

[Ogden Canyon pipeline project to have major traffic impacts](#)

[Utah Seeks Approval for \\$1B Lake Powell Pipeline Plan](#)

[OMNIBUS BILL FUNDS MANY NEW MEXICO PRIORITIES](#)

[U.S. Not Prepared To Defend Power Grid From Cyberattacks](#)

[SIEMENS TO PROVIDE BIODEGRADABLE TRANSFORMER TECHNOLOGY TO GLEN CANYON DAM](#)

[Interactive tool shows Colorado River drought \(Video\)](#)

[Earth Briefs](#)

[Government's Gold King Mine whitewash: Do as I say, not as I do](#)

[Foreign hackers latch on to US power grid](#)

[The 10 Best Government Instagram Accounts of 2015](#)

[Our Water Future: Scarcity In Southern NM](#)

[Gold King Mine Disaster Cause May Never Be Known, Thanks to EPA](#)

[New Web Tool Explores Drought In Colorado River Basin](#)

[The Battle to Save New Mexico's Last Wild River](#)

[Decision Analysis to Support Development of the Glen Canyon Dam Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan](#)

[Rocky Mountain snow a boon for southern NM](#)

[Wettest year in a decade for NM and Albuquerque](#)

#####





High scalers at Glen Canyon Dam.

#####

Reclamation Trivia

Here's this week's set of questions:

1. List the symptoms of CO (carbon monoxide) poisoning: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.
2. One of the Socorro crews is currently performing work at _____ through an interagency agreement with _____ and the _____.
3. The “_____” portal details the state of the watershed that supplies _____ Americans and _____ of land with water, despite reservoirs at about _____ capacity.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Last week, We asked,

1. According to the Information/Briefing Memorandum provided by the Provo Area Office, **The A.V. Watkins Dam**, was constructed from **1958-1964**.
2. Becky Begay explained how one would introduce themselves utilizing the Dine clan system by stating- **"I am born to the Greek People and born for the French People. My maternal grandfathers are the Swiss People and my paternal grandfathers are the English People."**
3. Hadrosaurs were **bipedal herbivores**, also known as **"duck-billed"** dinosaurs.

Last winner was – **N/A**

Please use this [link to send your answers](#). To be fair we will draw names from the winners and one person will receive a prize. We will reach into the prize bin for something suitable for the winner...as long as supplies last.

[Return to UC Today](#)



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation